

Helping Parents Support Reading at Home

Summary: Reading is, of course, not limited to the classroom. However, it can be difficult for parents to know how to best support their child's independent reading habits. An article for *The Reading Teacher*, adapted from the book "Creating Lifelong Readers Through Independent Reading," discusses how teachers can give parents guidance in this effort.

Practical Applications

The article explains that teachers can bring parents in as partners in many ways, including:

- Teaching parents how to do an effective read-aloud
- Teaching parents how to do paired reading with their child
- Teaching parents how to listen to and respond to their child's reading aloud
- Teaching parents how to set up a strong home library. Some specific steps here include:
 - "Creating the Space"
 - Find a space in the house to set up as the library, even if it's small
 - Create a book storage area using whatever materials make sense
 - If there is room, create a space for the child to sit and read
 - "Stocking the Collection"
 - Help the child find and select books. They don't have to be new, they can be gotten cheaply at yard sales, library sales, or at online discount book sites like www.bookcloseouts.com.
 - Quality is often more important than quantity – make sure there are books that the child will really love and want to re-read.
 - Have the child take ownership for the library by stamping the books and even creating their own books with construction paper.
 - "Displaying the Collection"
 - "Display books with covers facing out. Group books together by your child's favorite topics. Put books for younger children on the lowest shelves."
 - If there's room, display other cherished objects next to books that relate to them – seashells by the science books, for instance.
 - Help the child organize the collection in different ways – by genre, alphabetically, etc.

Conclusion and Citation

As teachers, we can promote students' independent reading habits outside of the classroom by bringing in parents as partners. Giving parents skills, tips and concrete ideas for supporting their child's reading helps everyone involved.

Adapted from Moss, B. & Young, T. "Creating Lifelong Readers Through Independent Reading," featured in "Independent Reading is Not an Independent Effort." *The Reading Teacher* 65.6 (Mar. 2012), pp. 378-380 <http://bit.ly/yLNQLb> (subscription only).